



Anattalakkhana Sutta

Buddha's Not-Self Characteristic Discourse



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Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta

Buddha's Not-Self Characteristic Discourse

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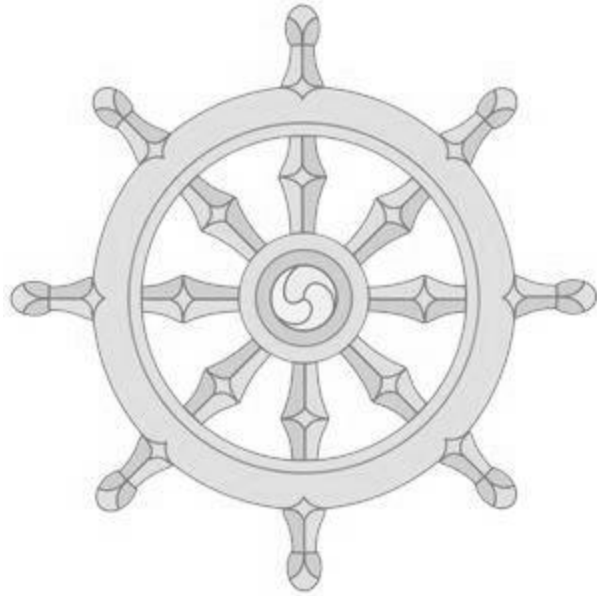
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Bangkok

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Preface

"Anattalakkhana Sutta : Buddha's Not-Self Characteristic Discourse" is a collection of the original text in Pali and in Chinese as well as translation from both sources. In Theravada tradition, Anattalakkhana is one of the most revered sutta or discourse or sermon by Lord Buddha. It explains the impermanence of being by declaring that all things are subjected to suffering thus unfit to identification with a "self". After this sermon Pañcavaggiya monks, the first companions of Lord Buddha reached enlightenment at the final state or Arhat, and the first sangha or the company of Buddhist monks was formed.

In Theravada tradition or Pali Canon this sutra is collected in Samyutta Nikaya ("Connected Collection," abbreviated as either "SN" or "S") and is designated by either "SN 21.59" (SLTP) or "SN 22.59" (CSCD) or "S iii 66" (PTS). This discourse is also found in the Buddhist monastic code (Vinaya)

While in Chinese Tripitaka this "Sutra" is found in the Samyukta Agama called Five Bhiksus Sutra taken from Taisho Tripitaka volume 2, number 99. The translation of original text in Chinese is taken from "Lapis Lazuli Texts"

The translation of original text in Pali is taken from "On the No-self Characteristic: The Anatta-lakkhana Sutta", translated, with an introduction by N.K.G. Mendis. Access to Insight (Legacy Edition), 24 November 2013,
<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/mendis/wheel268.html> .

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Introduction

The **Anattalakkhana Sutta** (*Pali*) or **Anaatmalaksana sutra** (*Sanskrit*), is traditionally recorded as the second discourse delivered by Gautama Buddha. The title translates to the "**Not-Self Characteristic Discourse**", but is also known as the **Pañcavaggiya Sutta** (*Pali*) or **Pañcavargiya sutra** (*Skt.*), meaning the "Group of Five" Discourse.

"Seven weeks after the recluse **Siddhattha Gotama** attained Supreme Enlightenment and came to be known as the Buddha, he gave his first discourse to the group of five ascetics with whom he had been associated six years earlier. These five ascetics were: **Kondañña, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahanama**, and **Assaji**. By the first discourse, the Buddha set in motion the Wheel of the Law. He explained to the five ascetics why he had discarded the two extremes of indulgence and mortification; he declared that he had discovered the Middle Way, which is the Noble Eightfold Path leading to Enlightenment; he expounded the Four Noble

Truths and convinced the five ascetics that he had attained Supreme Enlightenment."¹

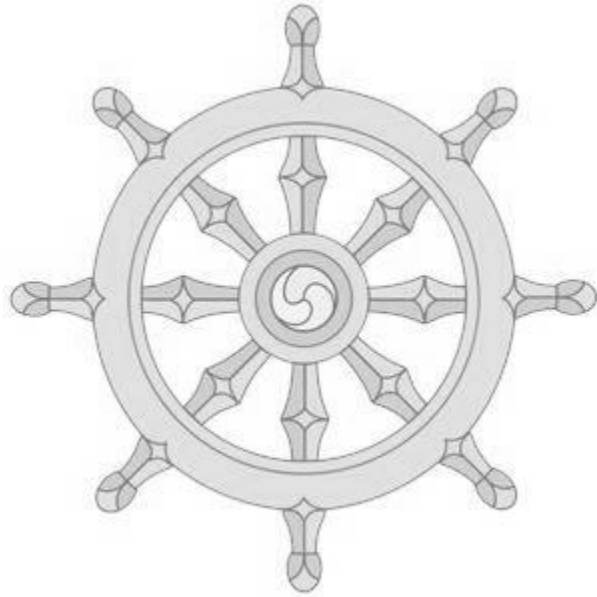
In this discourse, the Buddha analyzes the constituents of a person's body and mind (*khandha*) and demonstrates that they are each impermanent (*anicca*), subject to suffering (*dukkha*) and thus unfit for identification with a "self" (*attan*).

"At the end of the first discourse, the "spotless, immaculate vision of the Dhamma" arose in **Kondañña**, thus: "all that is subject to arising is subject to cessation." The **Venerable Kondañña** then told the Buddha that he wished to go forth under the Blessed One and asked for Full Admission, which he received. With further instruction by the Buddha, the "spotless, immaculate vision of the Dhamma" arose in the **Ven. Vappa, the Ven. Bhaddiya, the Ven. Mahanama**, and the **Ven. Assaji** in this order. They too knew thus: "all that is subject to arising is subject to cessation." These four ascetics, too, expressed their wish to go forth under

¹ N.K.G. Mendis. (2007). "On the No-self Characteristic ; The Anatta-lakkhana Sutta". in <http://www.accesstosight.org/>

the Blessed One and asked for Full Admission, which they received."²

² N.K.G. Mendis. (2007). "On the No-self Characteristic ; The Anatta-lakkhana Sutta". in <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/>



Anattalakkhana Sutta

Pali

Anattalakkhaṇasuttaṃ

Ekam samayaṃ bhagavā bārāṇasiyaṃ viharati isipatane migadāye. Tatra kho bhagavā pañcavaggiye bhikkhū āmantesi – “bhikkhavo”ti. “Bhadante”ti te bhikkhū bhagavato paccassosum. Bhagavā etadavoca –

“Rūpaṃ, bhikkhave, anattā. Rūpañca hidaṃ, bhikkhave, attā abhavissa, nayidaṃ rūpaṃ ābādhāya saṃvatteyya, labbhettha ca rūpe – ‘evaṃ me rūpaṃ hotu, evaṃ me rūpaṃ mā ahoṣī’ti. Yasmā ca kho, bhikkhave, rūpaṃ anattā, tasmā rūpaṃ ābādhāya saṃvattati, na ca labbhati rūpe – ‘evaṃ me rūpaṃ hotu, evaṃ me rūpaṃ mā ahoṣī’”ti.

“Vedanā anattā. Vedanā ca hidaṃ, bhikkhave, attā abhavissa, nayidaṃ vedanā ābādhāya saṃvatteyya, labbhettha ca vedanāya – ‘evaṃ me vedanā hotu, evaṃ me vedanā mā ahoṣī’ti. Yasmā ca kho, bhikkhave, vedanā anattā, tasmā vedanā ābādhāya saṃvattati, na ca labbhati vedanāya – ‘evaṃ me vedanā hotu, evaṃ me vedanā mā ahoṣī’”ti.

“Saññā anattā. Saññā ca hidaṃ, bhikkhave, attā abhavissaṃsu, nayidaṃ saññā ābādhāya saṃvatteyyum,

labbhetha ca saññāya – ‘evaṃ me saññā hotu, evaṃ me saññā mā ahoṣī’ti. Yaasmā ca kho, bhikkhave, saññā anattā, tasmā saññā ābādhāya saṃvattati, na ca labbhati saññāya – ‘evaṃ me saññā hotu, evaṃ me saññā mā ahoṣī’”ti.

“Saṅkhārā anattā. Saṅkhārā ca idaṃ, bhikkhave, attā abhavissaṃsu, nayidaṃ saṅkhārā ābādhāya saṃvatteyyuṃ, labbhetha ca saṅkhāresu – ‘evaṃ me saṅkhārā hontu, evaṃ me saṅkhārā mā ahesu’nti. Yaasmā ca kho, bhikkhave, saṅkhārā anattā, tasmā saṅkhārā ābādhāya saṃvattanti, na ca labbhati saṅkhāresu – ‘evaṃ me saṅkhārā hontu, evaṃ me saṅkhārā mā ahesu’”nti.

“Viññāṇaṃ anattā. Viññāṇaṃ ca idaṃ, bhikkhave, attā abhavissa, nayidaṃ viññāṇaṃ ābādhāya saṃvatteyya, labbhetha ca viññāṇe – ‘evaṃ me viññāṇaṃ hotu, evaṃ me viññāṇaṃ mā ahoṣī’ti. Yaasmā ca kho, bhikkhave, viññāṇaṃ anattā, tasmā viññāṇaṃ ābādhāya saṃvattati, na ca labbhati viññāṇe – ‘evaṃ me viññāṇaṃ hotu, evaṃ me viññāṇaṃ mā ahoṣī’”ti.

“Taṃ kiṃ maññatha, bhikkhave, rūpaṃ niccaṃ vā aniccaṃ vā”ti? “Aniccaṃ, bhante”. “Yaṃ paṇāniccaṃ dukkhaṃ vā taṃ sukhaṃ vā”ti? “Dukkhaṃ, bhante”. “Yaṃ paṇāniccaṃ dukkhaṃ vipariṇāmadhammaṃ, kallaṃ nu

taṃ samanupassitum – ‘etaṃ mama, esohamasmi, eso me attā’”ti? “No hetam, bhante”.

“Taṃ kiṃ maññatha, bhikkhave, Vedanā niccam vā aniccam vā”ti? “Aniccam, bhante”. “Yaṃ panāniccam dukkham vā taṃ sukham vā”ti? “Dukkham, bhante”. “Yaṃ panāniccam dukkham vipariṇāmadhammaṃ, kallaṃ nu taṃ samanupassitum – ‘etaṃ mama, esohamasmi, eso me attā’”ti? “No hetam, bhante”.

“Taṃ kiṃ maññatha, bhikkhave, saññā niccam vā aniccam vā”ti? “Aniccam, bhante”. “Yaṃ panāniccam dukkham vā taṃ sukham vā”ti? “Dukkham, bhante”. “Yaṃ panāniccam dukkham vipariṇāmadhammaṃ, kallaṃ nu taṃ samanupassitum – ‘etaṃ mama, esohamasmi, eso me attā’”ti? “No hetam, bhante”.

“Taṃ kiṃ maññatha, bhikkhave, saṅkhārā niccam vā aniccam vā”ti? “Aniccam, bhante”. “Yaṃ panāniccam dukkham vā taṃ sukham vā”ti? “Dukkham, bhante”. “Yaṃ panāniccam dukkham vipariṇāmadhammaṃ, kallaṃ nu taṃ samanupassitum – ‘etaṃ mama, esohamasmi, eso me attā’”ti? “No hetam, bhante”.

“Taṃ kiṃ maññatha, bhikkhave viññāṇaṃ niccaṃ vā aniccaṃ vā”ti? “Aniccaṃ, bhante”. “Yaṃ paṇāniccaṃ dukkhaṃ vā taṃ sukhaṃ vā”ti? “Dukkhaṃ , bhante”. “Yaṃ paṇāniccaṃ dukkhaṃ vipariṇāmadhammaṃ, kallaṃ nu taṃ samanupassituṃ – ‘etaṃ mama, esohamasmi, eso me attā’”ti? “No hetuṃ, bhante”.

“Tasmātiha, bhikkhave, yaṃ kiñci rūpaṃ atītānāgatapaccuppannaṃ ajjhattaṃ vā bahiddhā vā oḷārikaṃ vā sukhumāṃ vā hīnaṃ vā paṇītaṃ vā yaṃ dūre santike vā, sabbāṃ rūpaṃ – ‘netuṃ mama, nesohamasmi, na meso attā’ti evametāṃ yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya daṭṭhabbaṃ.

Yā kāci vedanā atītānāgatapaccuppannaṃ ajjhattaṃ vā bahiddhā vā oḷārikaṃ vā sukhumāṃ vā hīnaṃ vā paṇītaṃ vā yaṃ dūre santike vā, sabbāṃ rūpaṃ – ‘netuṃ mama, nesohamasmi, na meso attā’ti evametāṃ yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya daṭṭhabbaṃ.

“Yā kāci saññā atītānāgatapaccuppannaṃ ajjhattaṃ vā bahiddhā vā oḷārikaṃ vā sukhumāṃ vā hīnaṃ vā paṇītaṃ vā yaṃ dūre santike vā, sabbāṃ rūpaṃ – ‘netuṃ mama, nesohamasmi, na meso attā’ti evametāṃ yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya daṭṭhabbaṃ

“Ye keci saṅkhārā atītānāgatapaccuppannaṃ ajjhattaṃ vā bahiddhā vā olārikaṃ vā sukhumaṃ vā hīnaṃ vā paṇītaṃ vā yaṃ dūre santike vā, sabbhaṃ rūpaṃ – ‘netamā mama, nesohamasmi, na meso attā’ti evametamā yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya daṭṭhabbaṃ.

“Yaṃ kiñci viññāṇaṃ atītānāgatapaccuppannaṃ ajjhattaṃ vā bahiddhā vā olārikaṃ vā sukhumaṃ vā hīnaṃ vā paṇītaṃ vā yaṃ dūre santike vā, sabbhaṃ viññāṇaṃ – ‘netamā mama, nesohamasmi, na meso attā’ti evametamā yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya daṭṭhabbaṃ.

“Evaṃ passaṃ, bhikkhave, sutavā ariyasāvako rūpasmiṃpi nibbindati, vedanāyapi nibbindati, saññāyapi nibbindati, saṅkhāresupi nibbindati, viññāṇasmimpi nibbindati. Nibbindaṃ virajjati; virāgā vimuccati. Vimuttasmiṃ vimuttamiti ñāṇaṃ hoti. ‘Khīṇā jāti, vusitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ, kataṃ karaṇīyaṃ, nāparaṃ itthattāyā’ti pajānātī”ti.

Idamavoca bhagavā. Attamanā pañcavaggiyā bhikkhū bhagavato bhāsitamā abhinandumā [abhinanduntī (ka.)].

Imasmiñca pana veyyākaraṇasmiṃ bhaññamāne
pañcavaggiyānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ anupādāya āsavehi cittāni
vimuccimṣūti. Sattamaṃ.

Anattalakkhana Sutta

Translation

Anatta-lakkhana Sutta:

On the No-self Characteristic (Samyutta-Nikaya 22.59)

Thus it was heard by me. At one time the Blessed One was living in the deer park of Isipatana near Benares. There, indeed, the Blessed One addressed the group of five monks.

"Form, O monks, is not-self; if form were self, then form would not lead to affliction and it should obtain regarding form: 'May my form be thus, may my form not be thus'; and indeed, O monks, since form is not-self, therefore form leads to affliction and it does not obtain regarding form: 'May my form be thus, may my form not be thus.'

"Feeling, O monks, is not-self; if feeling were self, then feeling would not lead to affliction and it should obtain regarding feeling: 'May my feeling be thus, may my feeling not be thus'; and indeed, O monks, since feeling is not-self, therefore feeling leads to affliction and it does not obtain regarding feeling: 'May my feeling be thus, may my feeling not be thus.'

"Perception, O monks, is not-self; if perception were self, then perception would not lead to affliction and

it should obtain regarding perception: 'May my perception be thus, may my perception not be thus'; and indeed, O monks, since perception is not-self, therefore, perception leads to affliction and it does not obtain regarding perception: 'May my perception be thus, may my perception not be thus.'

"Mental formations, O monks, are not-self; if mental formations were self, then mental formations would not lead to affliction and it should obtain regarding mental formations: 'May my perception be thus, may my mental formations not be thus'; and indeed, O monks, since mental formations are not-self, therefore, mental formations lead to affliction and it does not obtain regarding mental formations: 'May my mental formations be thus, may my mental formations not be thus.'

"Consciousness, O monks, is not-self; if consciousness were self, then consciousness would not lead to affliction and it should obtain regarding consciousness: 'May my consciousness be thus, may my consciousness not be thus'; and indeed, O monks, since consciousness is not-self, therefore, consciousness leads to affliction and it does not obtain regarding consciousness: 'May my consciousness be thus, may my consciousness not be thus.'

"What do you think of this, O monks? Is form permanent or impermanent?"

"Impermanent, O Lord."

"Now, that which is impermanent, is it unsatisfactory or satisfactory?"

"Unsatisfactory, O Lord."

"Now, that which is impermanent, unsatisfactory, subject to change, is it proper to regard that as: 'This is mine, this I am, this is my self'?"

"Indeed, not that, O Lord."

"What do you think of this, O monks? Is feeling permanent or impermanent?"

"Impermanent, O Lord."

"Now, that which is impermanent, is it unsatisfactory or satisfactory?"

"Unsatisfactory, O Lord."

"Now, that which is impermanent, unsatisfactory, subject to change, is it proper to regard that as: 'This is mine, this I am, this is my self'?"

"Indeed, not that, O Lord."

"What do you think of this, O monks? Is perception permanent or impermanent?"

"Impermanent, O Lord."

"Now, what is impermanent, is it unsatisfactory or satisfactory?"

"Unsatisfactory, O Lord."

"Now, that which is impermanent, unsatisfactory, subject to change, is it proper to regard that as: 'This is mine, this I am, this is my self'?"

"Indeed, not that, O Lord."

"What do you think of this, O monks? Are mental formations permanent or impermanent?"

"Impermanent, O Lord."

"Now, those that are impermanent, are they unsatisfactory or satisfactory?"

"Unsatisfactory, O Lord."

"Now, those that are impermanent, unsatisfactory, subject to change, is it proper to regard them as: 'They are mine, this I am, this is my self'?"

"Indeed, not that, O Lord."

"Now what do you think of this, O monks? Is consciousness permanent or impermanent?"

"Impermanent, O Lord."

"Now, what is impermanent, is that unsatisfactory or satisfactory?"

"Unsatisfactory, O Lord."

"Now, what is impermanent, unsatisfactory, subject to change, is it proper to regard it as: 'This is mine, this I am, this is my self'?"

"Indeed, not that, O Lord."

"Therefore, surely, O monks, whatever form, past, future or present, internal or external, coarse or fine, low or lofty, far or near, all that form must be regarded with proper wisdom, according to reality, thus: 'This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.'

"Therefore, surely, O monks, whatever feeling, past, future or present, internal or external, coarse or fine, low or lofty, far or near, all that feeling must be regarded with proper wisdom, according to reality, thus: 'This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.'

"Therefore, surely, O monks, whatever perception, past, future or present, internal or external, coarse or fine, low or lofty, far or near, all that perception must be regarded with proper wisdom, according to reality, thus: 'This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.'

"Therefore, surely, O monks, whatever mental formations, past, future or present, internal or external, coarse or fine, low or lofty, far or near, all those mental formations must be regarded with proper wisdom, according to reality, thus: 'These are not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.'

"Therefore, surely, O monks, whatever consciousness, past, future or present, internal or external, coarse or fine, low or lofty, far or near, all that consciousness must be regarded with proper wisdom, according to reality, thus: 'This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.'

"O monks, the well-instructed noble disciple, seeing thus, gets wearied of form, gets wearied of feeling, gets wearied of perception, gets wearied of mental formations, gets wearied of consciousness. Being wearied he becomes passion-free. In his freedom from passion, he is emancipated. Being emancipated, there is the knowledge that he is emancipated. He knows: 'birth is exhausted, lived is the holy life, what had to be done is done, there is nothing more of this becoming.'"

This the Blessed One said. Pleased, the group of five monks were delighted with the exposition of the Blessed One; moreover, as this exposition was being spoken, the minds of the group of five monks were freed of defilements, without attachment.

Indeed, at that time there were six arahants in the world.

五陰誦

五陰誦

如是我聞：

一時，佛住波羅捺國仙人住處鹿野苑中。

爾時，世尊告餘五比丘：

「色非有我，若色有我者，於色不應病苦生，亦不得於色欲令如是、不令如是；以色無我故，於色有病有苦生，亦得於色欲令如是、不令如是，受、想、行、識亦復如是。

比丘！於意云何？色為是常、為無常耶？」

比丘白佛：「無常，世尊！」

「比丘！若無常者，是苦耶？」

比丘白佛：「是苦，世尊！」

「比丘！若無常、苦，是變易法，多聞聖弟子寧於中見是我、異我、相在不？」

比丘白佛：「不也，世尊！」

「受、想、行、識亦復如是。

是故，比丘！諸所有色，若過去，若未來、若現在，若內、若外，若麤、若細，若好、若醜，若遠、若近，彼一切非我、非我所，如實觀察；受、想、行、識亦復如是。

比丘！多聞聖弟子於此五受陰見非我、非我所，如是觀察，於諸世間都無所取；無所取故，無所著；無所著故，自覺涅槃：『我生已盡，梵行已立，所作已作，自知不受後有。』」

佛說此經已，餘五比丘不起諸漏，心得解脫。

佛說此經已，諸比丘聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。

Five Bhikṣus

Five Bhikṣus

in Saṃyukta Āgama

Thus have I heard. At one time the Bhagavān was dwelling in Vārāṇasī, at the Deer Park of Ṛṣipatana. At that time, the Bhagavān told a group of five bhikṣus, “Form does not exist as a self. If form existed as a self, then form would not be associated with the arising of illness and suffering. Regarding form, it is also not possible to cause it to be like this, or not like this, because form is not oneself. From form and the arising of illness and suffering, one also grasps the desire to make form like this, or not like this. For sensation, conception, synthesis, and discrimination, it is also such as this.

“Bhikṣus, tell me what you think: is form permanent or impermanent?” The bhikṣus addressed the Buddha, saying, “Impermanent, Bhagavān.” “Bhikṣus, is that which is impermanent, suffering?” The bhikṣus addressed the Buddha, saying, “It is suffering, Bhagavān.” “Bhikṣus, regarding these impermanent and afflicting dharmas, easily subject to change, does a well-learned venerable disciple perceive in these a self or a non-self, and thereby dwell in appearances?” The bhikṣus addressed the Buddha saying, “No, Bhagavān, and for sensation, conception,

synthesis, and discrimination, it is also such as this.” “For this reason, bhikṣus, all form that exists—whether in the past, the future, or the present; internal or external; coarse or fine; appealing or unappealing; far or near—all these are not a self, not a true self. Correct contemplation of sensation, conception, synthesis, and discrimination is also such as this.

“Bhikṣus, regarding the Five Skandhas, a well-learned venerable disciple perceives they are not a self, not a true self, and contemplates thusly. Regarding the various realms, because there is no clinging, there is no suffering, and because there is no suffering, there is self-awakening and Nirvāṇa. ‘My births have come to an end, Brahmacharya has been established, what was to be done has been done, and there is the self-realization of no further suffering.’”

After the Buddha had spoken this sutra, the group of five bhikṣus did not give rise to outflows, and their minds attained liberation. After the Buddha had spoken this sūtra, then the bhikṣus heard what the Buddha had said, and blissfully practiced in accordance.

